

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 1640 without my signature.

Water in California is a scarce and precious resource. Recognizing this fact, I made water supply improvement and water use efficiency a central platform of my Strategic Growth Plan. Any comprehensive water policy legislation must recognize the interaction between surface and groundwater and the importance of water supply and conveyance improvements.

This bill attempts to address a host of water policy issues in one bill. While the author should be recognized for the effort on urban water management plans, energy consumption associated with water use, and surface water diversion reports, the bill is flawed because there is no funding to implement these programs.

Requiring the Department of Water Resources to identify and oversee groundwater monitoring activities in every groundwater basin and subbasin in California is a very ambitious and expensive undertaking, yet there is no appropriation in the bill to cover these costs. The department is already mandated to produce a statewide update on groundwater basins known as Bulletin 118. The existing report includes a thorough analysis of groundwater, including a review of boundaries and hydrographic features, yield data, water budgets, well production characteristics, water quality, and development of a water budget for each groundwater basin. The State should work with local districts and landowners to develop a plan to acquire the information necessary to fill the data gaps that may be missing from Bulletin 118.

Additionally, the department should continue to work with local agencies by providing expertise and funding when available to implement the "Local Groundwater Management Assistance Act." This will assist local entities and landowners to help implement these provisions at the local level.

Groundwater is an overlying property right in California. Rather than imposing an unfunded mandate on State and local agencies and overlying landowners, a more effective approach would require the State to use existing information it has already compiled, cooperate with local agencies implementing groundwater management, and improve on its groundwater monitoring well program.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger